Shelving of Cellular Telephones

*17. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are thinking of shelving the Cellular Telephone proposal; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Foreign investment in power sector

*18. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1343 gievn in the Rajya Sabha on 1st December, 1992 and state:

(a) whether Government are considering the possibilty of giving sovereign guarantee to foreign investors in the power sector;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is the number of applications of foreign investors that have been cleared by Government, so far?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI N. K. P. SALVE): (a) and (b) The Government of India will consider extending a counter guarantee for the payment obligations of the State Electricity Boards to the private power companies on the specific request of the concerned State Governments.

(c) Three proposals have been cleared from the foreign investment angle.

Review of Central Excise and Customs Act

*19. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Federation of Indian Exports Organization has urged Government to review Central Excise and Customs laws; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the suggestions made and what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) The Federation of Indian Export Organizations has submitted a Pre-Budget Memorandum on 1.2.93 suggesting, inter alia, rationalisation of duty structure. This being mostly a budgetary matter, it will not be appropriate to indicate Government's reaction to their proposals.

Duty concessions to paper industry

*20. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:

SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether indigenous paper makers have been saddled with more levies than foreign units;

(b) if so, the details of the levies on indigenous and foreign units; and

(c) what steps being contemplated by Govt. in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) In the levy of excise duty on paper no distinction is made on the basis whether it is manufactured by an indigenous unit or others. Ths is so in respect of levy of import duty also.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Facilities at Vaishno Devi

21. SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of pilgrims who visited Vaishno Devi (Jammu and Kashmir) for darshan from October, 1992 to January, 1993 and how much

revenue has been earned during this year on this account; and

(b) what steps have been taken by Government during the last few years to provide facilities to such pilgrims keeping in view their increasing number at Vaishno Devi and what are the outlines of the plan for further development?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The statistics of pilgrims who visited Vaishno Devi during the period from October 1992 to January 1993 are not yet available from the State Government. The revenue earned from pilgrims are not being estimated.

(b) The development of tourism infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Government has identified Vaishno Devi as one of the pilgrim centres for providing infrastructural facilities and a sum of Rs. 45 lakhs has been sanctioned for the construction of a yatri niwas at Bhawan and Rs. 10.38 lakhs for providing tented accommodation at Katra and Bhawan during 1992-93. The future plan for further development include financial assistance for the construction of a pilgrim shed at Katra and tourist complex at Devamai.

Agreement with striking pilots of Indian Airlines

2. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:
MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what were the main demands of the I.C.P.A. which conducted the Pilots' strike in the Indian Airlines;

(b) what are the outstanding issues and whether Government has reached an agreement with them;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof;

(d) whether Government would be in a position to restore all the flights that were used to be operated before the strike began;

(e) what are the other details in this regard; and

(f) what measures Government propose to take curb the tendency of Indian Airlines staff/engineers to resort to strikes agitations?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) The main demands of the Indian Commercial Pilots Association as mentioned in their strike notice dated 24th November, 1992 inclusive reduction in basic pay of Commanders, violation of existing awards and settlement regarding career pattern, Management not meeting its commitments/obligations regarding flying hours, and creation of fear psyshosis. The strike was called off by Indian Commercial Pilots' Association unconditionally on 24-01-1993.

(d) and (e) Flights upto 78 per cent have already been restored by February 12. Full normalcy is likely to be restored by mid-April, 1993 depending upon crew availability and traffic build-up response.

(f) Bilateral talks are held by the management to discuss and resolve various issues raised by the unions. Unresolved issues, wherever necessary, are referred to the prescribed authorities for conciliation/arbitration. The Indian Airlines management, while ameliorating genuine grievances of the employees, is committed to enforcing discipline.

Payment of voluntarily retired employees of I.T.D.C. Hotels

3. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL